

The Purple Grackle as a scavenger.—The Purple Grackle (*Quiscalus quiscula quiscula*) has been under my observation for the entire summer. This bird is abundant in the National Zoological Park, and it is easy for one to observe and admire it on walks through the park. At this date of writing, August 22, 1943, the birds are gathering in combined family groups and engaging in pre-migration flights. The search for food is always first in their minds and they frequent many strange places to satisfy their greedy longings. Throughout the park are trash containers into which visitors deposit numerous objects, among which are lunch boxes containing bits of food. I have observed groups of *Quiscalus* perching in trees awaiting the deposit of scraps into these baskets, whereupon the group will dive into the container and pick out the food, fly away to a safe place to eat, and return to the container for more.

The many squirrels in the park accept peanuts from the hands of visitors. The grackle does not go this far in fraternization with humans, but diners on the open porch of the restaurant in the park are often amazed to see the bird walking around under the tables and flying away with bits of dropped food. This summer, while I was at Rehoboth Beach, Delaware, large flocks of birds took possession of the beach in their search for food particles discarded during the day by bathers. They appeared to be fond of the popcorn that is sold to the vacationists on the boardwalk, and in the evenings searched the beach and boardwalk for any food that may have fallen to the ground.—MALCOLM DAVIS, *National Zoological Park, Washington, D. C.*

The grackle as a fisher.—The observation recorded by Cottam (Auk, 60: 594-595, 1943) reminds me of a rather similar instance of fishing by the Bronzed Grackle (*Quiscalus quiscula aeneus*). On August 15, 1943, I was watching several grackles flying about on the shore of Lake Michigan in southeastern Evanston, Illinois. One of the birds swooped across the calm surface of the water about five feet from shore, brushing its feet and breast feathers as it did so, and with its beak picked up a small, light-colored object. The bird momentarily alighted on the sand, then fluttered to the top of some near-by piling. In the bright light, at a distance of about twenty-five feet, I could see that the object in its beak was a motionless fish about one and one-half inches long. After a pause, the grackle, disturbed by the approach of a person, flew away with its prize. Several small fish, apparently young perch, were seen floating dead on the water in the place where the bird had swooped—VICTOR H. CAHALANE, *National Park Service, Chicago, Illinois.*

Remarkable aerial behavior of the Purple Martin.—What seems to the writer to be a remarkable exhibition of aerial activity on the part of a Purple Martin (*Progne subis subis*) was witnessed late in the afternoon of June 18, 1943, over the Inland Waterway near his home. This is across the Ashley River from Charleston, South Carolina, and lies on what is known as Wappoo Cut that connects the Ashley and Stono rivers.

About 7:15 p. m. on the above date, a male martin was seen going through extraordinary aerial gymnastics apparently to no purpose. However, closer observation revealed that the bird had a large, crinkly straw or wisp of grass with which it was very evidently playing. Flying normally at an elevation of about 100 feet, it would drop the straw and then diving, side-slipping and rolling, would plunge beneath it and seize it in its beak again as it 'zoomed' upward to meet it.

In seizing the straw on several occasions it descended to within only a few feet